

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DODE-00 PC-04 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

INR-10 LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 NIC-01 RSR-01

SCS-03 AID-20 CCO-00 FBO-01 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10

M-03 OC-06 OPR-02 PA-03 USSS-00 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01

OMB-01 SS-15 SY-10 NEA-10 /156 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5969

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1042

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT AC

SUBJ: UNEASY CALM PREVAILS IN ANTIGUA: ELECTRICITY AND
WATER SUPPLY RESTORED

REF: A. BRIDGETOWN 0998, B. BRIDGETOWN A-126 (ITEM1)

FROM AMBASSADOR

1. SUMMARY: POWER, WATER AND TELEPHONE SERVICES RESTORED OVER WEEKEND; STRIKE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW WALTER GOVERNMENT; POWER PLANTS AND WATER PUMPING STATIONS STILL UNDER HEAVY GUARD.

2. I VISITED ANTIGUA 23 AND 24 IN CONNECTION WITH CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY AT THE USNAVFAC. ELECTRICITY SERVICES RESTORED SPORADICALLY BEGINNING FRIDAY EVENING (REF B), FULLY RESTORED OVER WEEKEND. I TALKED WITH PREMIER WALTER, DEPUTY PREMIER ROBERT HALL, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND LABOUR HALSTEAD AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT SOCIAL EVENT FOLLOWING CEREMONY AND HAD SEPARATE HOUR-LONG MEETINGS DURING AFTERNOON WITH GOVERNOR SIR WILFRED JACOBS AND WITH DEPUTY BGR RICHARD GILLET. IN EVENING I MET WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE U.S.

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CITIZEN RESIDENT MORGAN BEATTY. THEIR OPINIONS FAIRLY CON-

SISTENT THAT THIS STRIKE WAS ATTEMPT BY TIM HECTOR, AFRO-CARIBBEAN MOVEMENT (ACM) LEADER, TO CAUSE DOWNFALL OF WALTER-HALSTEAD GOVERNMENT BY POPULAR DEMAND IF SUCH ESSENTIAL SERVICES AS ELECTRICITY, WATER, TELEPHONES, TELEGRAPH COULD BE WITHHELD FOR SEVERAL MORE DAYS. WALTER ADDRESSED NATION ON RADIO SUNDAY NIGHT; PROMISING RESTORATION OF SERVICES, ADVISING PEOPLE TO STOP DRINKING UNBOILED RIVER WATER, ETC.

3. WALTER APPEARED IN GOOD SPIRITS NOT ONLY BECAUSE HIS EFFORTS TO END STRIKE APPEARED TO BE SUCCESSFUL, BUT ALSO BECAUSE ANTIGUA POLICE HAD SUCCEEDED ON MONDAY EVENING (23RD) IN LOCATING LOCAL PRINTER WHICH PUBLISHES THE SCURRILOUS AND SCANDALOUS SHEET OF THE ANTIGUA FREEDOM FIGHTERS (AFF). PRINTER NAMED CLARENCE PILGRIM ARRESTED; AND, WALTER SAID, LATEST EDITION AFF SHEET JUST READY TO GO TO PRESS WAS SEIZED. THEY APPEAR TO HAVE THE RIGHT MAN THIS TIME (UNLIKE THEIR ARREST OF PC VOLUNTEER LAST YEAR), BUT PILGRIM SO FAR INSISTS THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHO WRITES THE SHEET; THAT THE MATERIAL IS SENT TO HIM; THAT HE HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF WHO THE PRINCIPALS ARE.

4. CONSENSUS OF OPINION OF GOVERNOR AND DEPUTY BGR ON STRIKE SITUATION SEEMS TO BE THAT TIM HECTOR, ACM LEADER, WHO IS 29-YEAR OLD RADICAL, MARXIST, ANTI-WHITE CIVIL SERVANT, WHO IN THE PAST HAS NOT BEEN AN OVERT ADVOCATE OF VIOLENCE (SEE EMBASSY A-83, JUNE 21, 1972 AND HECTOR'S BIO REPORT OF SAME DATE), NOW FEELS THAT HIS TIME HAS COME TO CAUSE OVERTHROW OF WALTER GOVERNMENT. FOLLOWING HIS SUSPENSION FROM TEACHER POSITION IN MAY 1973, AS HE APPEARED TO BE GATHERING GROUP OF RADICAL TEENAGE FOLLOWERS, HE WAS PLACED IN ANOTHER CIVIL SERVICE POSITION IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION BUT GIVEN NO DUTIES. THIS APPARENTLY GAVE HIM OPPORTUNITY MORE COMPLETELY TO ORGANIZE THE PUBLIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION, OF WHICH HE IS NOW VICE PRESIDENT (AND BOSS). HE APPARENTLY HAS KEY FOLLOWERS IN EACH OF THE ELECTRICITY, WATER, TELEPHONE AND CABLE SERVICES WHO PERSUADED OTHERS TO FOLLOW THEM OUT UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDED SEVERANCE PAY (WHICH WOULD HAVE COST DOLS 3 MILLION WHICH GOA DOESN'T HAVE) PLUS SECONDING THEM TO THE NEW UTILITIES AUTHORITY DESCRIBED IN REFTELA. GOVERNOR TOLD ME THAT THE MAJORITY OF THESE EMPLOYEES WERE VERY WILLING TO RETURN TO

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THEIR JOBS BY THE WEEKEND AND WERE QUITE WILLING TO ACCEPT SECONDMENT WITH POSTPONEMENT OF SEVERANCE PAY UNTIL THEY ACTUALLY WERE SEVERED OR RETIRED. SOME 250 OR 500 NOW RETURNED, OTHERS BEING SUSPENDED, NEW WORKERS BEING HAND PICKED BY HALSTEAD AND COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER WATTS. POWER PLANTS, DESALINIZATION PLANT, AND WATER PUMPING STATION MANNED BY THESE EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEER REINFORCEMENTS TO THE POLICE FORCE. SOME SABOTAGE TO PUMPING STATION CONTINUES TO CAUSE SHORT INTERMITTENT WATER

FAILURES ESPECIALLY IN SOUTHERN AREA OF ANTIGUA.
DONOVAN

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